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SUBJECT: UKRAINIAN DEPUTY PM NEMYRIA STRIKES THE RIGHT NOTE
AT NATO HQ

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Richard G. Olson, Jr.
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: In a thoughtful and articulate presentation, Ukrainian Deputy PM Hryhoriy Nemyria briefed the NATO Ukraine Commission on his new role in coordinating his government's cooperation with NATO, and the political situation in Kyiv. Allies offered encouragement, but those that would like to prevent a NATO offer of a Membership Action Plan (MAP) in December questioned Ukraine's political stability and expressed concern about the high level of public opposition to closer links with NATO. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Ukrainian Deputy PM Hryhoriy Nemyria met with the NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) on July 2 to discuss his new coordinating role overseeing Ukraine's cooperation with NATO.

¶3. (C) The SYG, introducing Nemyria, said this meeting would constitute an important part of both Ukraine's Intensified Dialogue with NATO and the period of intensive engagement mandated at the Bucharest Summit. He recalled that heads of state and government at Bucharest had decided that Ukraine will become a member of NATO, and that the Membership Action Plan (MAP) would be the next step. The SYG welcomed the progress that Ukraine has made, but emphasized the need for improved interagency efficiency and adequate funding for defense and security sector reform.

¶4. (C) DPM Nemyria opened his presentation with the observation that the Bucharest Declaration was a milestone, that signaled the end of &business as usual in the relationship between Ukraine and NATO. He said Ukraine has been critically assessing the progress of reforms, and had decided to bring NGOs into this exercise to give outside experience and expertise that should be carefully heard. Nemyria described how he had been given &personal responsibility for effectiveness in the Ukraine-NATO relationship, an &old-style Soviet tasking which could be a double-edged sword. His response had been that he would only accept such personal responsibility if the right structure were to be put in place. Nemyria said that discussions in the Cabinet had left him with two ideas that would be key to his role: (I) There is need for an improved mechanism that will make horizontal coordination across ministries work, and; (II) Any new coordination body must be placed high enough to ensure that the political and the executive levels are linked effectively. He shared that the written plan for his role was at the Presidential office, with signature expected &within days, adding that he was engaged in an ongoing process of dialogue with the Presidential office to ensure the preservation of the

necessary ideals in the plan. Responding to PermReps' questions on this issue, Nemyria said he had proposed that his office be staffed by up to 60 personnel with the necessary experience and training to exercise a coordinating role. One-third of the staff would be devoted solely to EuroAtlantic/NATO integration.

15. (C) Nemyria also spoke of his commitment to deliver a higher quality, timely, and streamlined Annual Target Plan (ATP) for 2009. He said he had taken a personal interest in monitoring progress of the 2009 ATP and encouraged an open process which would enable Ukraine to learn Allies, opinions on what it needs to correct. His plea was for a dialogue of substance, so we can get things done.⁸

16. (C) Turning to future reforms, Nemyria made a case for modernizing Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, to focus it appropriately on defense and security rather than potentially mirroring the Cabinet. He suggested that it would be important to avoid expanding its powers when defining its role. Nemyria also acknowledged the validity of certain PermReps' concerns about the defense budget.

Public Outreach

17. (C) Nemyria said that he had not come to Brussels to paint a rosy picture of public opinion in Ukraine. Such an approach would not inspire trust. Nemyria observed that Ukraine's character is an amalgam of regions, some with more of a Soviet legacy than others, and therefore requires a very high quality communications effort. He said Ukraine had decided to triple the budget of its information campaign and implement a

plan to run from 2008 to 2011. Nemyria thanked the PermReps for their interactions with the public while visiting Ukraine, saying that sometime the source is even more important than the message. In response to PermReps' questions, he concurred that agreement with the opposition at the political level will not be enough, and highlighted his efforts to bring the issue to the people by offering to personally debate the shadow cabinet in universities.

18. (C) Nemyria cautioned against a propaganda-type effort, saying years of Soviet rule had left the Ukrainian population inherently resistant to such methods. He expressed his happiness with the publicity efforts during the recent European Football Championships, where Ukrainian viewers tuning in for a game were presented with basic information about the participation of both countries in European and EuroAtlantic institutions. (In a clever move, Nemyria also mentioned he had bought his son an (orange) Dutch national soccer uniform, earning amused praise from both the SYG and the normally skeptical Dutch PermRep). Nemyria highlighted the importance of engaging NGOs and young people in outreach efforts as more than just recipients of information, instead making them active in the debate. He said the GoU is also working to counter opponents, claims that NATO integration will be about turning Ukraine into a bulwark against Russia.

Political Stability

19. (C) Nemyria acknowledged that Ukraine's political infighting raises doubts in some minds about his country's ability to deliver what has been agreed. He asserted that Ukraine has a broadly-established framework for political stability,⁸ having held three legitimate and democratic elections that had successfully established the conditions for a democratic society. He said that the ongoing process of development, including reform of presidential power and the parliamentary system, is itself taking place in a transparent and democratic manner, something that will lend legitimacy to the eventual result. In an effort to charm Norway, one of the less-hardline cynics on MAP for Ukraine, Nemyria took advantage of the discussion on political stability to suggest that Oslo is the only capital in Europe with a highly-stable coalition government.

10. (C) Nemyria said that PM Tymoshenko had been consistent

in her discussions with Russia on the EuroAtlantic integration issue. Putin had agreed with her on the need for a referendum but had also indicated Ukrainian movement towards NATO would lead to Russian withdrawal from cooperation in the military-industrial sector. Nemyria asserted that despite this, Tymoshenko and Putin had established a pragmatic relationship in which they had committed not to discuss highly political issues in an idiosyncratic manner. He expected them to meet again in Moscow in September.

Allied Response: Encouragement, but Political Stability and Public Opinion in Question:

¶11. (C) Lithuania, Romania, Poland, Canada, Estonia, Portugal, the U.S. and France all praised Ukraine,s organization of the NAC visit to Kyiv in June. The French PermRep went on to say that Nemyria,s visit to Brussels was an example of the vitality of the Alliance, and that Paris supports Ukraine,s EuroAtlantic aspirations.

¶12. (C) Germany looked forward to the visit of Chancellor Merkel to Kyiv, saying that it is "not business as usual" in the NATO-Ukraine relationship. The German asked how Nemyria saw the information campaign being tailored. He also asked Nemyria,s opinion of how difficult it will be to pass legislation, including the budget, in the current political climate. Portugal questioned the current level of political stability and Spain asked if there was sufficient support remaining in Parliament to ensure continuation of the reform process.

¶13. (C) The U.S. and Romania highlighted the distinction between MAP and membership, as PM Tymoshenko herself had underlined. U.S. Charge Olson emphasized that MAP is a tool to begin reforms necessary for membership (and not something

to be awarded only when a country has already met all the criteria for membership). He praised the planned inter-ministerial coordination system and asked when it would begin in earnest. Slovakia, Lithuania, Romania and Hungary echoed this praise, welcoming visibly increased Ukrainian ownership and unity of message in relations with NATO.

¶14. (C) Public opinion weighed heavily on the minds of some Allies. Hungary said it does not see a divided Ukrainian society on the NATO issue, just one that is lacking in information. The Hungarian offered his country,s assistance with the information campaign. The UK asked how Ukraine can work on fostering acceptance by the Ukrainian people of increased ties with NATO. Estonia called on the GoU not to underestimate the opinions of those that oppose closer ties with NATO. Italy said it supported membership for Ukraine but added that political transparency would be crucial, as would efforts to build consensus and involve civil society. Italy was also joined by Slovakia, Lithuania, Poland, and Canada in praising Ukraine for the new public information campaign and the tripling of its budget.

¶15. (C) Poland and Canada praised Ukraine for its contribution to NATO operations. They were joined by Chairman of the Military Committee Admiral Di Paola who thought such military cooperation was essential to developing interoperability.

¶16. (C) Lithuania hoped for a successful period of intensive engagement that would lead to MAP in December. Canada and Italy called on Ukraine to continue its reforms, while Slovakia and Romania offered to help with reform efforts, based on their own national experience.

¶17. (C) Comment: Nemyria did well in this encounter. Allies appeared uniformly impressed with his professional, thoughtful and informative presentation, as well as with his willingness to acknowledge difficulties where they exist. While he has not changed the minds of anyone on the MAP issue

for Ukraine for December, Nemyria has presented a picture of a more mature and balanced Ukrainian effort in its relationship with NATO. The key to consolidating this impression is for Nemyria to be successful in securing the necessary power and tools to effectively carry out his mandate. At future meetings Allies will be looking for evidence of results.

OLSON